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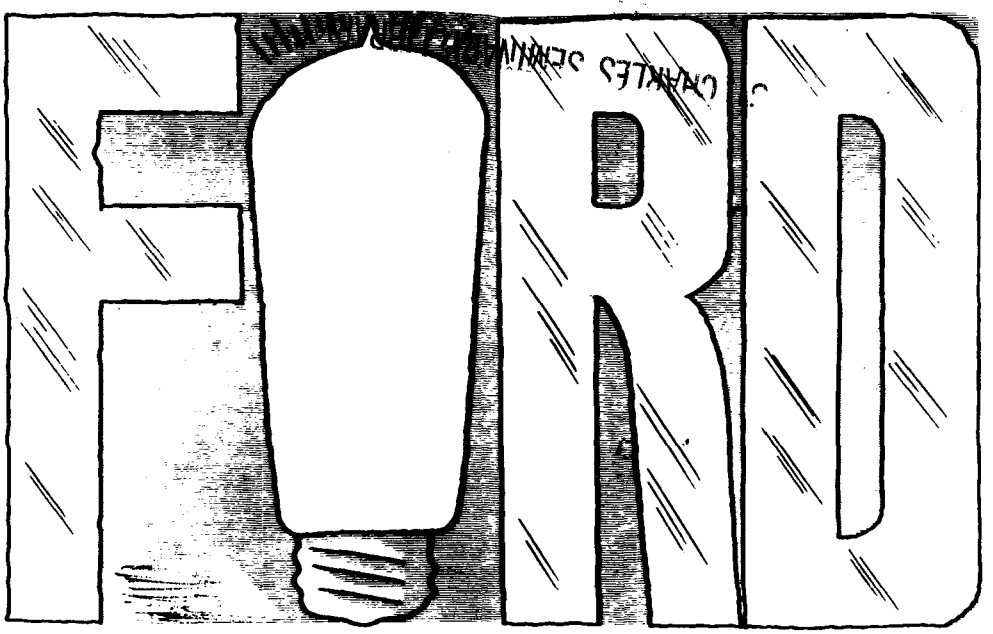
commonweal

Fiftieth Anniversary Year

THOMAS E. CRONIN

AN AGENDA FOR



R.M. NIXON: AN AMERICAN FAILURE STORY
WILLIAM LEE MILLER

CYPRUS: THREE-DIMENSIONAL PROBLEM
RICHARD C. HOTTELET

THE VATICANIZING OF AMERICAN ART
FRANK GETLEIN

FLYING THE UNFRIENDLY SKIES
ABIGAIL McCARTHY

THE SCREEN: GUI

JR.

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NEWS & VIEWS

Watergate Books

Volume 1, Number 1 of *Bookletter*, the new biweekly "insider" from the editors of *Harper's*, expressed some doubt about the future of Watergate as a commercial book topic. The Bernstein-Woodward book, *All the President's Men*, is selling well, and so also Jeb Magruder's *An American Life; One Man's Road to Watergate*. But what about the flood of Watergate books due from Theodore White, Elliot Richardson, Clark Mollenhoff, E. Howard Hunt *et al.*?

"It remains to be seen how high interest will be by the time the many contracted books are published," said *Bookletter*.

Its hedging was based (a) on a *New York Times* report that newspaper readers, at least, were showing boredom with Watergate, and (b) problems of timing and the law.

"For example, John Dean, who was supposed to have signed with Farrar, Straus & Giroux, but who has been unable to put anything to paper for fear it would be subpoenaed, may never be able to complete a book. He is still under a subpoena to testify . . . and it may be quite a few months before that book hits a bookshelf. The same goes for Spiro Agnew's novel, which seems to have dropped from sight."

The experience of William Safire, the *New York Times'* house conservative, lends apparent substance to *Bookletter*'s doubts.

He and William Morrow & Co. are locked in private commercial arbitration over a 250,000-word manuscript that Safire was contracted to produce (for $250,000 against royalties) on Safire's personal experiences around the White House and on his view of Nixon's first term. Morrow turned the manuscript down on literary grounds and is asking the return of $83,000 advanced to Safire. Safire, who has since gone to Doubleday with the manuscript, counters that Morrow backed out because of Nixon's precipitous slide from popularity.

Nixon's Future

Two hours after Richard Nixon left office, a $25-million damage suit was filed in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia seeking to void results of the '72 Presidenitial election on grounds of "fraud and corruption." The suit named as a defendent Richard M. Nixon.

That same day, the nation's largest dairy co-op—Associated Milk Producers, Inc.—sued Nixon's campaign trust for return of $100,000 given illegally in 1969.

Then, within the week, came the subpoena to testify as a defense witness in the Ehrlichman trial; further developments in the suit of the Nader Tax Reform Research Group challenging the validity of the "gift" of Nixon papers to government archives; and tentative whispers about disbarment.

The developments pointed up the utter impossibility of that talk about providing Nixon immunity from prosecution and from badgering in the courts. Fear not. He or his surrogates, will be in and out of courts for the indefinite future. But then he's a lawyer anyway, isn't he?

Incidentally, if the Nixon Presidency could be summed up in a single paragraph (which, of course, it can't), this 'graph from the London *Daily Telegraph* might be nominated:

"The sordid clique which he brought into the White House and with which he talked in a sleazy and obscenely vulgar style entirely absent from his talks and contacts with others seems to have corroded part of his character."

Such as remained, that is.

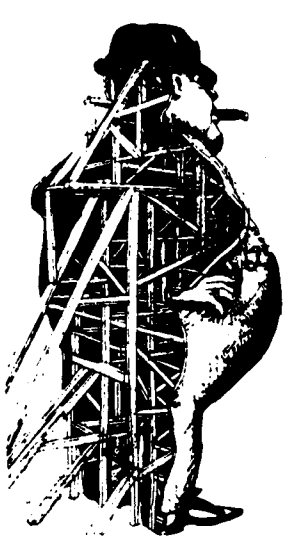
Dog Days

Again this year the heat of summer got to Catholic decision-making.

In Marlboro, Mass., a pastor denied baptism to a three-month-old child because the baby's mother supported the right of a woman to have an abortion. Chancery concurred in the action against the baby. Jesuit Father Joseph O'Rourke traveled from New York to perform the sacramental ministry rejected locally.

In Detroit, the editor of the archdiocesan newspaper, the *Michigan Catholic*, canned columnist Brian McNaught, after it was learned that he is a president of Dignity, national Catholic organization for homosexuals. Among other things, the action contravened the city's charter providing equal rights for homosexuals.

Finally, there was the disinviting of James Douglass, author, theologian and Catholic pacifist, as a speaker at the Pax Christi meeting to be held in Washington next month. Officials acted ostensibly on the grounds that Pax Christi could not guarantee unity of support in the event Douglass is arrested. (He risks arrest on re-entering the U.S. from Canada, his birthplace and home, for refusing to pay a fine for pouring blood on military records in Hawaii.) The real reason, more probably, was Douglass' marital status; he is divorced and remarried. An open letter signed by prominent figures of the Catholic left charges that it is "tragic" to exclude from a conference concerned with peace "any person who might contribute to the common effort of peacemaking, even though his conscience may put his life at variance with present vocational norms within the church."



Bulletin Populaire/LNS

Oops!

Gremlins were at work Aug. 5 in the composing room of the *Washington Post*. This, in its entirety, the next morning's paper:

24 Poorest Nations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS, Aug. 5—Twenty-four countries have annual gross national products of below $400 per capita, according to a United Nations list based on 1971 data.

Mr. Nixon said he recognized this additional material "may further damage my case, especially because attention will be drawn separately to it rather than to the evidence in its entirety."

Odds and Ends

—John Cooney's comment in the May 24 *Commonweal* proved out: in Ireland, the bishops do indeed still dominate the bedroom. This summer the Irish Parliament defeated, 75 to 61, a bill that would have legalized the sale of contraceptives to married people. (The measure would have denied sale to the unmarried.)

—Predictably, there will be fewer Daniel Ellsberg's in Big Brother's future. Xerox has developed an invisible spray that can make any document immune from copying. The spray contains a flourescent dye coating that "confuses" copying machines.

—With the breakdown of the Italian post office, its effective alternative, the Vatican postal system, has become known as the "Angel Express." JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Credit Due

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: In the article "Two's a Party?" in your June 28 issue, Sisyphus says "Common Cause, perhaps the major new nonpartisan grouping of citizens appears not completely adequate. Its grey-flannel middle-class perspective does not appear to include within its ambit tough issues such as maldistribution of wealth, substantial tax reform and other bread and butter issues."

It's true that those are "tough issues." But it was apparent when Common Cause was founded, that little significant change on social issues would occur until someone had the guts to tackle the even tougher issues of *money* and *secrecy* as corrupters of the public process. Those who exercise real power in the society will be totally unconcerned by reforms combatting social injustices, so long as those reformers lack the realism to assault directly the arrangements by which insiders preserve their power and deprive citizens of access to their own government.

Common Cause has led the battle for a system of politics and government that is open, accountable and unbought. Give it credit. JOHN GARDNER

Chairman, Common Cause

No Difference

Denver, Colo.

To the Editors: I am writing to you with feelings of sadness and regret. Sadness, in that I am writing a letter that is critical, rather than laudatory in nature; regret, for not writing to you in regard to the many excellent articles I have read in *Commonweal.*

However, let me get to the matter at hand. Abigail McCarthy's *"La Différence Américaine,"* which appeared in your June 14th issue, is riddled with female chauvinism and anti-male bias.

For example, she states that women in Congress are more sympathetic to the needs of the elderly than men. Ap-

(Continued on page 487)

NEWS & VIEWS: 466 **CORRESPONDENCE:** 467
EDITORIALS: 467
CYPRUS: THREE DIMENSIONAL PROBLEM: *Richard C. Hottelet* 468
FLYING THE UNFRIENDLY SKIES: *Abigail McCarthy* 471
AN AGENDA FOR FORD: *Thomas E. Cronin* 472
AN AMERICAN FAILURE STORY: *William Lee Miller* 472
VERSE: *Joanne Childers* 470; *Dave Smith* 475
THE SCREEN: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 478
THE VATICANIZING OF AMERICAN ART: *Frank Getlein* 480
HARRISBURG: A SUMMING UP: *Doris Grumbach* 483
BOOKS: *Margaret Wimsatt, Mark Taylor* 485
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THE VICE PRESIDENT DESIGNATE

Nelson A. Rockefeller, when confirmed, will bring indisputable gifts to the Vice Presidency: fame, presence; long experience in public service, both as appointed and elected official; qualities of leadership that in fact overshadow those of the new President; notable commitments to some vital facets of American life, as to higher education; and, not least, broad connections. The last asset should translate to new faces on the Washington scene, something badly needed and a problem which President Ford has been shockingly slow in remedying. Imagine General Haig still directing Oval Office traffic; Earl Butz still running Agriculture, etc.

This said, it should also be mentioned that Nelson Rockefeller symbolizes much of what is wrong with modern America: too much money—more, indeed, than any one man or one family should control; delinquent responsiveness to some of the major personal and political issues of our time (the war in Vietnam and Watergate stand as clear examples); and some badly circumscribed social instincts that leave him vulnerable to criticism for many of his dealings with Latin Americans, Asians and the underprivileged of our own country. Congressman John Ashbrook of Ohio has remarked that he knows of "no person who can identify less with the problems of the average American than Nelson Rockefeller," no one who can less identify "with the elderly living on fixed income, the housewife with her budget problems, the small businessman meeting a payroll, or the average worker just trying to keep his head above the water." Ashbrook may overstate—but he has a point.

The reality is that as Governor of the State of New York for fifteen years, Nelson Rockefeller came to know intimately the full range of problems that modern society is capable of heaping upon humanity; the complication is that this knowledge frequently could not escape the equation into which was calculated the supreme ambition of Nelson Rockefeller's life, the Presidency. Accordingly, the liberal Nelson Rockefeller of his early governorship could become the near-reactionary of recent years, when political aspiration dictated a different ideological philosophy. He wuold fume about "welfare chiselers," enact drug-control measures that can only be described as Draconian, and turn a dead ear to the pleas of prisoners at Attica, thus

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helping to precipitate the ghastly 1971 massacre in which 35 inmates and eight guards died.

Once ensconsed in the Vice Presidency, however, Nelson Rockefeller at age 66 will have gone about as far politically as his years will realistically allow—barring, of course, the intervention of fate. It is a circumstance that is likely to produce a Rockefeller of less fitful ideology, and maybe even a Rockefeller of earlier liberal sensitivities. Gambling on this likelihood, his nomination is acceptable. It might even be welcomed on grounds that Rockefeller's unique financial background makes him a valuable resource in the fight against inflation, which is rapidly becoming an overriding concern. In any case, the nation has been through enough travail. To fight the Rockefeller nomination would be to renew an agony without any guarantee of getting somone better.

Nelson Rockefeller should be confirmed, and with no more delay than it takes for him to ready his records and the pertinent Congressional committees to conduct their hearings.

This is not to say that the confirmation hearings should be perfunctory. Nelson Rockefeller should be probed as searchingly as any unknown quantity would be. The experiences of the past few years should put Congress on guard against presumptions about the most obvious—or the most famous.

In this context, it is to be hoped that Congress will dig deeply into the details of the Rockefeller fortune. More stands to be learned here than some choice family secrets. The hearings could, in fact, help point up one of the great national urgencies: the need for a more equitable distribution of wealth. Inevitably there will be objections that this makes Nelson Rockefeller a pawn of sorts in an issue entirely separate from that of the matter at hand. There is no denying that fact. But, as Nelson Rockefeller has on occasion demonstrated himself, good politics is often the art of the oblique.

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

CYPRUS

THREE-DIMENSIONAL PROBLEM

If the tragedy of Cyprus hammers home one lesson it is this: time alone does not heal.

Cyprus is a part of the age-old struggle between Turk and Greek, burdened with the rancid heritage of a Kulturkampf fought in song and story, in open war and private blood. In a way, ingrained for a longer time, it is more intractable than the conflict between Jew and Arab in the Middle East. Nothing could be more wrong than to treat the Cyprus question as a local affair, resolvable by some quick stroke of pen or sword, or otherwise to be wrapped up and put away for calmer times and cooler tempers.

Ten years ago, when the first effort at solution came unstuck, a United Nations force (UNFICYP) was devised to do what heavy water or graphite do in a nuclear reactor: to separate the radioactive components of the pile and keep them from coming together in a critical mass. The hope was that a reduction in the level of violence, the onset of what could be accepted as normality, would develop from day to day a habit of peaceful interaction between the Greek majority and the Turkish minority inside the framework of a single state, a sovereign member of the United Nations. Some years before, the UN had been enlisted in similar, neater fashion, to man a clear frontier line between Israel and Egypt. But in 1967, the UN Emergency Force in the Middle East was swept away at Nasser's command. In 1947, UNFICYP found itself elbowed aside by a Turkish army landing on Cyprus. Each time the UN had helped to provide ten years of breathing space but the statesmen who should have used the opportunity to settle the essential dispute found it impossible.

One reason is that—as far as Cyprus is concerned—the problem is three dimensional. The tension between the Greek and Turkish communities on Cyprus is closest to home. It is, however, inseparable from the background of friction between Greek and Turk, which began long before the fall of Byzantium. Above them both is the NATO factor, the strategic considerations which flow from Greece and Turkey's membership in the western alliance. This last touches on such sensitive points as Turkey's control of and Moscow's never extinguished lust for the Bosporus and the Dardanelles. It affects the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean—not so much through the sovereign British bases on Cyprus itself as through bases and other facilities in Greece and Turkey of interest to the United States.

Those who incline to think that the United States coddled the successive military regimes of Greece simply in order to satisfy some geopolitical appetite of the Pentagon may reflect on the events of September 1970. When the radical Palestinian guerrilla groups forced a life or death showdown with King Hussein of Jordan, and when an armored force from Syria crossed the border into Jordan to support them, the United States saw the fragile chance of political settlement in the Middle East in danger of being swept away. Washington together with Israel, decided as a last resort openly to intervene on Hussein's side. The Israeli air force was only minutes away but the U.S. airborne contingents

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which would have gone into Amman—ostensibly to evacuate American citizens—had to be drawn from the United States and Germany. NATO would have no part of the operation. The soldiers from Germany were not allowed to overfly France but had to be flown around Europe to the only land base available for the final push, the Greek island of Rhodes. Whatever might have been the risk of this intervention, the fact that it was possible may in the end have made it unnecessary. Syria withdrew the tanks; Hussein prevailed.

United States commitment in the Greco-Turkish area is older and broader. President Truman, in March 1947, enunciated the doctrine that the U.S. would help Greece and Turkey defend themselves against open or covert Soviet aggression. Moscow had been supporting a civil war in Greece and had been pressing Turkey to turn over not only a base on the Bosporus but also the eastern provinces of Kars and Ardahan. Britain, drained by World War II, could not continue its traditional role in Greece. Without the Truman Doctrine, Greece and Turkey might well have succumbed. Later, in order to spread and more widely to institutionalize the American responsibility, both countries were brought into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Great Britain, which held Cyprus from 1878 to 1959, when it gave the island independence, is intimately concerned with the local problem. Britain, together with Greece and Turkey, is a guarantor power of the painfully contrived constitution with which Cyprus became a sovereign state. This constitution, providing elaborate legal safeguards for the distinct life of the Turkish community on the predominantly Greek island, was set aside by the President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios, at the end of 1963. He found it—with its Turkish vetoes in matters of taxes, defense and foreign affairs, as well as the ethnic proportions prescribed for the army, police and civil service—an insuperable barrier to efficient government. The ethnic Turks saw their existence in danger. Intercommunal fighting flared up beyond the capacity of Britain or NATO to control. UNFICYP, the UN force, was dispatched to keep the lid on.

Turkey had been ready to intervene at once but was dissuaded by what Dean Acheson later called "the most vigorous representations from the government of the United States." Again in June 1964, after new and increased violence, Turkey prepared to send a force to Cyprus—only to be told by President Lyndon Johnson that the US Sixth Fleet would intervene, if necessary, to stop it. This was long before the colonels seized power in Greece. The warning, which bitterly antagonized Turkey, was the price the U.S. was willing to pay to avert the nightmare of a NATO war.

In 1974 that nightmare threatened to become reality. Cyprus had been quiet for years, as regards Greeks and Turks. It was inside the Greek camp that proponents of enosis (union with Greece), led by the guerrilla gangs of EOKA-B in the tradition of the late Gen. Grivas, intensified their violent protest against Makarios' policy of status quo sovereignty. Assuming, probably correctly, that EOKA-B worked hand in glove with the Greek officers who had run the Cyprus National Guard since 1964, Makarios asked Athens to order them home. The regime in Athens replied by overthrowing Makarios.

Several things combined to turn this Greek quarrel into a Greek-Turkish crisis. Firstly, Athens and Ankara had been on each other's nerves over the exploitation of newly discovered oilfields in the Aegean Sea. Secondly, the man who replaced Makarios, Nicos Sampson, was a red cloth to the Turkish bull—characterized by Ankara as a thug and murderer in earlier violence against the Turkish community. Thirdly, although Sampson immediately disavowed enosis, Turkey assumed that he would give the enosis movement new impetus, especially since a success of that sort would greatly strengthen the Athens regime of Brigadier Ioannides. Fourthly, the Turks' pent up frustration of 1964—which, incidentally, had been aggravated in almost exactly the same way in 1967—could not tolerate a new defeat. The government of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit was weak. It would not have been able, even had it wanted, to keep the Turkish army from landing on Cyprus.

The U.S. saw the impossibility of restraining the Turks and concentrated, at first, on persuading the Greeks not to indulge in the folly of attacking Turkey. In a few days, the high point of crisis seemed over. Sampson had been replaced on Cyprus by the moderate Glafkos Clerides. In Athens, the colonels were out and constitutional government restored under Constantine Caramanlis. Both changes were welcomed in Ankara. However, it was soon clear that they made no difference to a Turkish government which was determined not to allow Cyprus to return even to the status quo of 1960. The Turks declared that they intended to keep a military presence on the island as protection for their kinsmen and to accept nothing less than federation as the new political structure of Cyprus. The Greeks see federation as a euphemism for partition.

On the island, the Turkish army took little notice of calls for cease fire by the UN Security Council or by the Geneva Conference of the Guarantor Powers. UNFICYP was pushed aside as the Turks enlarged the territory they controlled and roughly expelled the Greek Cypriot population. When the Geneva negotiations did not give Turkey the political solution it sought, a loose bi-communal federation, the Turks moved ruthlessly to capitalize on their strategic advantage. They broke out of the Kyrenia beachhead to cut off the entire northeastern third of the island.

The U.S. and Britain had tried to persuade the Turks not to go too far, arguing that concessions could still be achieved for the Turkish community through negotiation. Ankara would not listen. Anglo-American leverage is

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limited. NATO needs Turkey almost as much as Turkey needs NATO. Another argument which Ankara disregarded was that inflicting too deep a humiliation on the Greeks would be counter-productive. Greece is prepared to swallow a great deal. Too much would put the new government under patriotic pressure—not from the right, which is bankrupt, but from the left. On Cyprus, Clerides, who is by far the best the Turks will find to deal with, could be swept away by Ankara's intransigence and replaced by men who would wage guerrilla war against the Turkish community and the Turkish army. Since Cyprus is 80 percent Greek and the Turkish army's performance so far has not earned it military laurels, this could open a new and fateful chapter of the Cyprus story. London and Washington are now trying to bring the parties to the negotiating table, where a certain measure of compromise might lead to a *modus vivendi* and avert the worst.

The Soviet Union, meanwhile, follows events closely. Excluded from the Geneva Conference, it would like to see the authority of the UN Security Council—in which Moscow has a loud voice and a definitive veto—imposed on the Cyprus negotiations. Its purpose would be to preserve Cyprus as a sovereign, nonaligned state with NATO forces withdrawn, a bone of contention between Greece and Turkey and a perennial source of domestic discord in them both. So far, Moscow has tried not to offend Turkey yet to hold open doors to the new government in Athens. It has strongly endorsed Archbishop Makarios as the legitimate President of Cyprus, while Britain has tipped its hat to him and Washington has looked the other way, ready to accept him too if he brought stability but very much doubting that he could. Makarios, for his part, is waiting in London for whatever may come.

One response of the world community at the outset of the crisis was to enlarge UNFICYP and agree to make it a buffer around the zone of Turkish control on Cyprus. The new function has now been overtaken by events, together with the original mandate of 1964. If a Cyprus settlement is not found, UNFICYP would find itself the international guarantor of the Turkish *fait accompli,* or caught in a guerilla war, or simply floundering on the sidelines—each clearly unacceptable. Experience has made one thing abundantly clear: UN peace forces do not solve problems; *vide* Kashmir and the Middle East. They only buy time for settlement. If governments do not use that time it can become an explosive rather than a healing force.

RICHARD C. HOTTELET

(Richard C. Hottelet, a previous contributor, is United Nations correspondent for CBS News.)

JOANNE CHILDERS

THE TRAMP c.1936

(Lines written on hearing my son ask, "What's A Tramp?")

His head illumined by the back porch light,
His clothes the color of dusk on rainy days,
He sits on the wide wood stairs in the mizzling haze
In the winter-time of my old river town.

What torment or what self-indulgent pity
Has brought him here in a sway-backed chill box-car,
Through snowy fields, through grey mist tressel-high,
To the lit back-porch of yet another city?

Does anything live in him to call him back
From the iron bench, the damp newspaper blanket,
From the empty dejected railway station stench,
The plate of charity, the bitter lack?

His plate mopped up he stirs himself to rise,
To bleed a *thank you*, lurch on down the walk.
He marks the gate with chalk for other souls
Conversant with wet pavement and the skies.

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FLYING THE UNFRIENDLY SKIES

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Columnists as varied in outlook as William Buckley, Ralph Nader and Art Buchwald have complained about the airlines recently, and I would like to join the chorus. During a generally enjoyable trip to Europe I was made aware that many things, great and small, were nevertheless going slightly awry while we, perforce, bent all our attention to our number-one national problem.

There is the breakdown in the communications systems of the international airlines, for example (no doubt one of the reasons both Pan-American and Trans-World applied to the government for help this year). I was no sooner aboard the beetle-like conveyance which takes passengers from Saarinen's beautiful airport building at Dulles airport to the plane that I noticed my baggage checks and realized that the chatty young woman who checked me in had failed to check my bags through to Berlin. I rushed off the beetle. A soothing agent said there was no problem. It was a TWA error. He took the number of bags. TWA would communicate with Frankfurt and transfer me and my bags. Not to worry.

But worry I did, and at breakfast time the next morning (breakfast follows almost immediately on the four-hour-long dinner stretch on trans-Atlantic flights these days) I confided my problem to the stewardess. It was clear that we were going to be a little late in Frankfurt. Would I be able to get my bags and make my connection? I had only a little over an hour. She entrusted my problem to the captain and brought back word that I was not to worry. Someone would meet me, help me find my bags, and make the Pan-Am connection. As I deplaned—a word the airlines have added to the language—I was given a note to give to the waiting agent. The agent immediately outside the door—a stylish blonde—said disapprovingly, "It must be given to the agent at the end of the tunnel." At the end of the tunnel a very correct-looking German looked at the note, said that Washington should not make such promises, and that I would have to find my bags myself. There would be an agent at the carrousel who might help me. At the carrousel the agent looked at the note and said that it was not his duty to help with such things. The man at the tunnel should not have suggested it. I understood the game at last and filed the note in my purse.

I found my bags. There were no porters and none of those wonderful cart-contraptions which make German travelers independent of both agents and porters, but a friendly woman offered to share her cart with me. With much pulling and pushing we got through customs and up and down escalators (the carts adapt to them in a clever European way) and I finally checked my bags through to Berlin half an hour before plane time.

Checking myself through was not so easy. The Pan-Am desk was completely surrounded by shouting, arm-waving men, all brandishing tickets. Pan-Am personnel, cheerful and shoulder-shrugging, peered listlessly at lists, inspected an occasional ticket and talked to each other. "Was ist los?" I said to a delighted bystander. "They have the tickets," she answered in English, "but the seats they have not." I learned later that it was the day of the opening of the world soccer matches in Berlin. Thirty to forty thousand fans from Chile alone were en route to Berlin. Pan-Am had apparently oversold on three continents. I appeal to a blue-blazered young agent standing by, no doubt getting in his required hours observing passenger behavior under stress. He looked at my ticket. "Your TWA plane came in forty minutes ago. Where have you been?" he queried severely. I explained about the bags and noted that it was still twenty minutes until plane time. If he could help me get near the counter? "I do not help," he said and walked off. I think it must have had something to do with maintaining his amateur status.

In due course the plane went off without me or the shouting men who dispersed grumpily, saying rude deleted things in four languages. I explained my plight to a portly man who seemed to be in charge at the desk. He examined my ticket with some show of concern, and said, not to worry, I would be on the next plane in an hour. He took my name. I was to sit down until it was called. But no one called and the clamor and the crowding started again. (In Germany people do not queue in the effete and non-athletic manner of Americans and Britons—they bunch with elbows stiffly akimbo and rush the objective whatever it may be, airline counter, coffee bar or tea table.) This time I got to the desk, but a smiling Brunhilde refused me a boarding pass. My name was not on the list, she commented.

The uproar continued. The gates opened, the boarding pass holders poured through, and the next plane was off without me.

I gathered all my courage and determination and made for the Pan-Am office which turned out to be in charge of the portly man who had taken my name. He snorted at my complaints and stalked ahead of me down the long approach to the desk, disdaining to note that I was struggling with two heavy tote bags. (I *know* better, my liberated sisters, but I was tired and hot!)

It was my fault. I had not picked up the boarding pass according to his

(Continued on page 487)

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AN AGENDA FOR FORD

THOMAS E. CRONIN

On expecting instant results from an instant President

Changing Presidents heightens American hopes, expectations and demands, but hardly ensures that our major national problems are resolved or even that they will be attacked effectively. The act of changing the person at the top is considerably different from governing the nation. To be sure, everyone applauds the vigorous manner in which Gerald R. Ford has *come off the bench* and assumed the reigns of leadership. President Ford has signaled several constructive changes in tone and manner—and who is not grateful for these? Still, offering assurances of stability, of continuity of policies, and of an open Presidency is basically symbolic action.

To lead the nation requires considerably more than symbolic actions. It calls for tough priority setting, crisis management, skilled legislative program formulation, vigorous political coalition-building, keen personnel decisions, administrative follow-through, and much more. The immediate agenda for Ford consists of focusing these leadership skills on several critical problems facing the nation—each of which is crying out for leadership attention.

We should be cautious about expecting instant results from our instant President. The Presidency as an institution is usually more limited in its resources and its options than the general public assumes—or even than most Presidents assume. Too many people infer from its power to deploy nuclear weapons that it has similarly extraordinary power in domestic and economic affairs. Too many people infer from its administrative manpower of more than 5 million and from its $305 billion budget that it should be able to organize solutions to any problem. But the executive branch of the federal government is a many-splintered thing. Ours is also a deficit budget and has been for several years. Most economists, moreover, agree that the modern budget has very few controllable items; that is, few programs that can be cut back much or redeployed. Hence, whatever Ford wants to achieve will have to cost very little or will require tax reform or tax increases.

The romantic aura of the *making of the President* is seldom properly balanced by the inevitable *braking of the President*—the myriad of brakes that prevent Presidents from acting swiftly, efficiently or effectively. Presidents often just lack the knowledge about what should be done. Agreement on what a problem is nearly always is easier to come by than agreement about what is to be done, how it should be done and who is to pay for it. Then there is always the problem of organizing political coalitions to get what is desirable done. Too, in a democracy we are limited in implementing decisions in that we must do it by democratic procedures—and this almost ensures a certain amount of inefficiency. Finally, even if a President has adequate knowledge about what to do, nearly every action has unintended consequences (for example, the side effects of the interstate highway system or nuclear power plants). The lessons of the past suggest that our solutions are likely to become our children's problems. But quite apart from these obstacles, which perhaps should mitigate some of our unrealistic expectations, there are key substantive issues that must be high on Ford's agenda.

Nearly everyone agrees that President Ford's number one problem, indeed the number one problem throughout

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the world, is double-digit inflation. Gerald Ford's capacity to lead will be tested in this area as in no others. The problems of the economy are acute, and are likely to undermine his initial claims that he wants to be President of all the people. Invariably, Presidential decision-making will advantage certain interests at the expense of others, and Ford will win critics for whatever strategies he adopts. How can he simultaneously please organized business and labor? How can he please those wanting to increase domestic spending and those who want to cut federal expenditures? He calls for the passage of a compromised national health insurance program. But of course he knows, everyone knows, that any serious national health insurance measures will cost several billions. He says that he wants to achieve budget cuts that will be equitable and fair to everyone. But already he seems to be in a no-win situation.

President Ford's address to Congress implied that he wants to continue a non-partisan program of encouraging growth in defense spending. But any leveling off of federal expenditures necessitates an intensive scrutiny of the nation's military and defense budget with a shrewd eye on where at least seven to ten billion might be cut. Maintaining current defense policies will require that we increase the defense budget from its current levels of $85 billion to well over $100 billion in fiscal 1980. Gerald Ford is among the large number of people who claim that our most important problems today are internal—domestic ones. The world has changed but the U.S. defense establishment and defense budget have not. Our military budgets are geared to an era of confrontation, not an era of negotiations and détente. As Clark Clifford aptly states: "There exists a gap—an undeniable gap—between a foreign policy that purports to deal with a world of détente, and a defense policy that is mired in the backward-looking attitudes of the Cold War." Do we have to wait until we really have a $100 billion Pentagon budget before our President and the Congress take a serious look at where we are going, what we are paying for? This will be a critical test for Ford.

There is no single remedy for the state of the economy. Ford will also have to come up with something far more inventive and effective than a warmed-over Nixon approach to the problem of spiraling wages and prices. Nixon's efforts in this area were a disaster. By itself, the resurrection of the Cost of Living Council will be of little help. Nor will occasional jawboning with big business. Cutting back on federal expenditures makes sense in a few areas, but the most likely cuts—those in education, housing, manpower and anti-poverty programs—will have enormous undesirable consequences, inflicting even more economic hardships upon the lower and lower-middle classes, the elderly and the needy.

Besides paring back military spending, fighting inflation will require tax reform, including reductions of personal taxes at the lower income levels where inflation hits hardest and extensive elimination of tax loopholes. Ford ought to give very serious consideration to Arthur Burns' suggested public employment program. Fighting inflation doubtlessly will also require a return to some form of economic controls, even though this will have to be imposed over the opposition of big business and labor. Economic controls, of course, can only work if they are administered by those who believe them, a condition that was grievously absent in the Nixon control venture. Ford also has an obligation to get the American people to understand fully the magnitude of our long-term energy crisis and the magnitude of the critical world food shortages. As things stand now, it is as if we want to ignore these two basic propositions. Presidential leadership *can* force us to reappraise our insatiable quest for exorbitant, extravagant and wasteful living practices. Neither Ford's political honeymoon nor marriage will remain unruffled if and when he frontally tackles these tasks.

Mindful of the Watergate scandals there likely will be a concerted effort by the Ford Administration to steer clear of election abuses, extortion of campaign contributions and other conflicts-of-interests. But surely this is not a sufficient response to the variety of scandals we now (inadequately) term Watergate problems. What must be done to ensure honest elections? What can be done to recruit the ablest people into political life—elected and appointed? How can we rebuild political parties that can win respect, debate national priorities, select outstanding candidates, and mobilize coalitions around what needs to be done? How can we free our candidates from cruel dependency upon the fatcats? And how can we make our conventions, campaigns and elections more open, rational and responsible?

President Ford is well aware of most of these problems. He seems especially concerned, and correctly so, about the importance of ensuring personal privacy. Surely, then, he will seek to initiate measures that will prevent the mindless politicization we have experienced within the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service and the Central Intelligence Agency. But Presidential actions alone will not be enough. Congress needs to move to establish proper oversight activities in this area. And the American public will have to insist on the Ford Administration that Justice, the IRS and the CIA are kept out of politics, are restrained from political trials, and invasions of personal privacy.

But will President Ford act as rigorously to inaugurate campaign practices reforms? Pledges that his Administration will not tap, bug or break and enter are not very reassuring. Indeed, that such pledges are necessary at all highlights our sad state of affairs. Our political parties are dying, the American public is outraged at the way our campaigns have to be financed, television and other incentives all move in the direction of stressing Hollywood-personality politics to the neglect of the issues that need clarification, definition and programmatic response.

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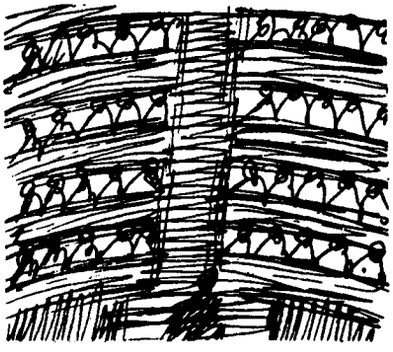
If Ford does not take initiatives in this area, he and the nation will surely have misread the lesson of Watergate and we will have turned our backs upon the realities of the underworld of American politics. Unfortunately, however much Watergate genuinely upset the nation's sense of justice and morality, we very much want to get on with other matters and leave Watergate behind. And there are many people who urge us to forget Watergate, to be satisfied that we have a new team at the top. But are these people afraid that basic reforms would threaten and destabilize those who now benefit from the way we presently nurture and elect our political elites?

We need campaign reforms that will provide strict limitations on campaign contributions and expenditures. We need vastly tougher full disclosure laws enforced by an independent Federal Elections Commission. We also desperately need to strengthen the political party committees at all levels of government. The 1972 election demonstrated a personal and private politics by both major candidates—unaccountable to parties, largely uninformed by party leadership and certainly independent of the checks and balances our parties can, if properly organized, provide. We must seriously consider channeling public funds and certain allotments of free television time through our party committees and councils at all levels of government. Political parties are needed to check the increasing cults of personality that have encouraged our Presidents to think themselves above consulting with the rank and file and even larger than law. As we now know, a partyless Presidential administration is very likely an arbitrary regime—unresponsive and irresponsible. A determined and effective Ford could help usher in the day when elections could be our finest hour—not a national embarrassment.

Ford assumes the office of President at a time when this institution is coming under the sharpest criticism of the century. Critics depict the Presidency as imperial, isolated, arrogant—in short, an essential institution that is fast becoming inconsistent with cherished democratic ideals. In his first few days Ford has pledged a conciliatory, open Presidency. "I wanna be a good President" he told us. But others before him also promised open Presidencies—and others before him were longtime products of the logrolling, bargaining, compromising Congressional culture. Lyndon Johnson was also of the Congress, but it was not long before his motto toward Congress was "we shall overwhelm." Mr. Consensus and Mr. "Let Us Reason Together" became a "we'll do it my way" autocrat. And who can forget President Nixon's ambitious proclamations of an open Administration, and open Presidency and his promise to hold press conferences whenever they were needed. His too, soon turned into a Presidency-by-secrecy, where "Being President means never having to say you're sorry—or wrong."

President Ford will inevitably find it is far more difficult to sustain an open Presidency than to pledge to one. In part this is because the Presidency is a cruel job. Unrealistic expectations constantly pound down upon its ocupant. We simultaneously demand a President to be the national unifier; yet, as priority setter, budget cutter and party leader, he must also act as national divider. Instinctive democratic leadership and dynamic executive talents are seldom joined in any one person; and even then, the one set of qualifications can easily destroy the other. Ford, like those who have gone before him, will of course struggle courageously with these dilemmas. But rarely have Presidents succeeded in resolving them. It seems cruel to put a person in a position where it is nearly certain that he will fail, and then pillory him for



not succeeding. But it is what the United States invariably does to its Presidents, with little understanding, pity or tolerance.

What can be done about the state of the Presidency? Can we afford a weakened Presidency when there is so vast a national agenda that needs activist and creative leadership? What can be done about the "swelling of the Presidency"—that large bureaucratization in and around the White House accompanied, seemingly, by an arrogance or hubris which holds that what is good for the President is good for the nation? What about the cabinet? What about regularized press conferences?

High on Ford's agenda should be a reappraisal of the Presidency as an institution. He needs to reasssess how much can be administered at the White House, and what matters need to be delegated to an enhanced cabinet, a better used Vice Presidency or to other federal departments. Recent Presidents have abused and misused the officers of the permanent departments, and antagonism between the White House and departments has seriously impaired the creative implimentation of Presidential programs. A sprawling Executive Office bureaucracy, created because Presidents need help and protection, has its own problems. A swollen public-relations corps has actually diminished Presidential credibility. Large staffs create conflicts, alienate the cabinet, make line administrators more distant, and attract more duties to the White House than necessary. A strong Presidency, ideally, should be a lean and candid one. It should be accessible to Congress and the cabinet and should speak —or be listened to—as something more than just a shrewd public-relations agency.

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As a people we need to do our part to deglamourize and demythologize the American Presidency. President Ford seems, initially, to be a willing partner in this campaign. Perhaps there exists some yearning of the human heart to return to royalty. But we rejected monarchy 200 years ago and there is no reason to revert to it today. One of our greatest challenges is the capacity to fashion a system of collective leadership, responsive and responsible to the people. In recent years we have become too executive-dependent, too dependent on the President. We ought to encourage multiple centers of shared leadership and public authority. Too many tasks and expectations visited upon the Presidency will either crush it or make it imperial.

Again and again we need to recognize the political character of the Presidency. We, of course, want purposive leadership, we want a president who can set our sights high and liberate our best talents for societal tasks —but we should not look to the Presidency for social, stylistic or religious leadership. To seek the latter is to elevate the Presidency above politics, and those who yearn to take the politics out of the Presidency or remove the President from politics do us a great injustice. The Presidency is, and should be, a highly political office —that is, a President must listen, negotiate, bargain, compromise, and work very directly in the thicket of the political arena. Politics is not just the art of the possible. It is, in the case of Presidential leadership, the art of making the difficult and desirable possible. A President in a democracy has to act politically in regard to controversial issues if we are to have any semblance of government by the consent of the governed; that is, he must negotiate and mediate between groups, compromise differences, and find acceptable alternatives. As a nation, we must mature to the recognition that the President has to be political and he ought to be a vigorous partisan leader as well. Politics should not stop at the water's edge, nor at the Pentagon's doorstep. Mindless bipartisanship has been one of the worst obstacles to open politics and creative debate in the past two decades —and perhaps too the chief cause of the imperial Presidency.

Ford would do well too to pare back the public relations staffs at the White House. They could be cut in half and everyone would benefit. The Executive Office of the President, now containing nearly 4,000 aides, could also be cut back; many staffs and councils there could easily be placed beneath the appropriate cabinet officers. The Executive Office should only contain salient central review staffs such as the Council of Economic Advisers, Office of Management and Budget and National Security Council. Administrative and operations staffs should be in departments or agencies. In this way, the cabinet will be better used and less undermined. Ford should also see to it that the appointment prerogative is better used than it has been under recent Presidents. The power to recruit and appoint people who share your policy views to key executive branch posts is at the same time the most important yet the most underrated power a President possesses. As the Nixon example evidences, battles with the federal bureaucrats rarely achieve anything. Ford and his new lieutenants will accomplish far more if they learn to work cooperatively with the permanent government, listening to them, finding out what incentives shape their performance and strengthening the hand of those already there who share the policy views of the White House.

Ford will also contribute to a strenthened and more democratic Presidency if he dispels the habits of secrecy that have endlessly surrounded the recent Presidency. Freedom of information is critical. Manipulation of the news and reliance on the convenience of secrecy have denigrated not only the Presidency but the entire democratic process. At best, secrecy insulates, and makes the President remote. And as we now know, it also helps Presidents conceal mistakes and scandals.

Sunlight is obviously the best of disinfectants. Ford should meet the press regularly and perhaps for longer more freewheeling periods. It would help also if he would meet occasionally with a score of Congressmen in public, before television, to answer tough questions and review his own performance. The President should also experiment with televised meetings of occasional forums of representative citizens who can put questions to him directly—again in an effort to remove the temptations of isolation and secrecy.

The Ford agenda is long and exciting. The new President has won our sympathy, support and prayers, and he will need them all.

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DAVE SMITH

PARKERSBURG, W. VA.

Along the river tin roofs
the color of blood
release little rivulets
of greasy smoke

longjohns hang in the wind
like loose-jointed ghosts
I can see current
making herringbones

against blue slate rocks
my great-great grandfather
was said to love this place
I toss someone's whiskey bottle

a promise spreads, a shatter
of stars no one notices
I wonder if anyone remembers
the day he fell

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AN AMERICAN FAILURE STORY

WILLIAM LEE MILLER

Kicking Richard Nixon around just one last time

In a long and slightly nasty magazine article I wrote in 1956, under the title "The Debating Career of Richard Nixon," I remarked that the very debating talents that had brought him rapidly to the eminence he had then achieved ("the Vice-Presidency," as in the Nixon style we could say) might also someday undo him. One could not have guessed back then the altogether unlikely sequence of events that would follow in the next 18 years before that prediction would finally come true.

And yet it was always true. Mr. Nixon's career has been an American failure story from its beginning and throughout—in his meeting with triumph as well as with disaster, those two imposters that he definitely did *not* treat just the same. That was one flaw in him. He cared too much about "winning" and "losing," and thereby "lost" already, however his many game plans for life turned out. The Quitter, the Loser, the Failure: he was all of those in the end, because it meant too much to him not to be. He quit, much later than he should have quit; he failed, as he need not have failed, in the very teeth of a mammoth "success"; he lost the highest of positions, by a forced resignation, in an "historic first," because in his anxiety he sanctioned a program he did not need at all to "win."

He failed his way steadily upward, in a grotesque parody of the Horatio Alger story he himself altogether too much believed in. He failed in the unfairness of his first victory over Jerry Voorhis in 1946; he failed more severely in the gross and more visible unfairness of his victory over Helen Gahagan Douglas in 1950; he failed in the insistent borrowing from his role in the Alger Hiss case, as though for ever after a grateful nation ought to do whatever he recommended, as though anyone who opposed him on anything thereafter must be in league with Communists and with Hiss. He failed in the opportunism that brought him the Vice-Presidential nomination, exploiting the sterile anti-Communism of that period and abruptly abandoning Earl Warren's candidacy at the 1952 convention to go with the winner. In the "crisis" of the Nixon Fund of 1952 he failed most spectacularly, creating in his Checkers speech the very model of what not do, in the dangerous age of mass communication. He failed in the nasty campaign of 1954, touring the Western states linking honorable men like Senator John Carroll of Colorado to Communism.

When he finally achieved "the Presidency" he proved that there is room to fail at the top. His failure endangered even his successes, as he borrowed insistently from his foreign policy achievements to argue for his retention in office after the Watergate disclosures.

Did he fail also in defeat? One kept wanting to say that Richard Nixon was not really quite as bad as it seemed to those of us who had always opposed him ("hated" him, he would say revealingly, even on his last morning in the White House. Why raise that subject just then? The overt message was: don't hate them back; they can only hurt you if you hate them back. The more powerful covert message was already delivered by his even raising, on such an occasion, this inappropriate subject: there are people out there who "hate" you). Those of us who had long opposed Richard Nixon kept looking for the qualifications and exceptions, for no man altogether fits the stereotypes that develop around him. Theodore Sorensen, the young assistant to the young Senator from Massachusetts, one day in the middle-fifties nodded at the door of the Vice-President's Senate Office Building office, just across the hall from Senator Kennedy's, and said, you know, Nixon isn't as bad as people think he is.

I never got in to see Vice-President Richard Nixon, back in 1956 when I was working on that article; Rose Mary Woods, wisely, kept putting me off. She discerned, quite accurately, that I was no friend, and she certainly knew the magazine I was working for was no friend of Richard Nixon. But I was told several times by knowledgeable Washington people—including Democrats and liberals—that Nixon in private was not only more intelligent but also a more decent person than his public reputation in some circles. In his first Administration as President the late Stewart Alsop wrote a column on the "Demonsterization of Richard Nixon"; how people like me who had long opposed him were discovering now that he was not the monster they had thought him to be.

Appointing Henry Kissinger first as the National Security advisor in the White House, and then also as Secretary of State, and supporting him in what would

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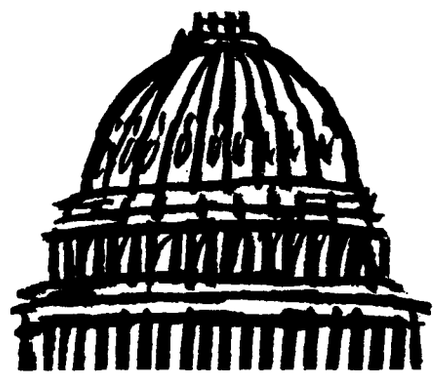
be called in the Nixonian hyperbole "Great Initiatives for Peace": that was something we did not expect from Richard Nixon. His appointing and supporting Kissinger does not fit. At first glance his open doors to China and detente with Russia did not fit, with the irony often noted that this man who came onstage as the rigid anti-Communist doing what no Hubert Humphrey could have got by with. He proposed a *"full employment* balanced budget," a budget that *would be* balanced, if the economy were at full employment: not so very different from what we liberals would propose. He joined in saying "we are all Keynsians now." He appointed Pat Moynihan to the White House staff, and proposed that first possibility of a guaranteed income—the Family Assistance Plan—that Moynihan insists the liberals killed. (Others disagree: Nixon did not fight for it they say). He reversed himself completely and instituted wage and price controls in August of 1971. But if one's point is not that he was a consistent conservative—far from it—but that he was an adventurer and opportunist and sophist who calculatingly seized upon popular moods to use them for his "winning," then all of this does not refute the point so much as it confirms it.

I asked, though, whether he also failed in defeat. One wanted to believe he would not. In the 1960 campaign, as a young man emerging from the shadow of Eisenhower—difficult to deal with—a candidate now in his own right for the nation's highest office, with the wounds of all those Herblock cartoons and all those articles like mine stored up inside him, he tried I think for the moment to rise to something higher than the stereotype of himself that had developed, and to match the dignity of the office to which he aspired. His speech accepting the nomination was good, arguably better than John Kennedy's, with nothing like the nasty thrust at Ramsey Clark and the other delinquencies that would mar his acceptance speech eight years later. On the whole his campaign against John Kennedy in 1960 was much less bad than his other campaigns had been. The one dubious thrust was minor, grossly ineffectual, and ironic now: he praised Ike's clean language in the White House as against Mr. Truman's swearing. It is a little symbol of his failure. How can he have thought he could get by with it? In the magazine *Time,* owned by Joseph Kennedy's friend Henry Luce, Ike's use of barracks room language was quickly underscored. And now that we know from those awful transcripts what Mr. Nixon's own language is like, including his language as the President in the White House, the demagoguery is transparent. It is one secret of Mr. Nixon's failure: how could he have so despised the public's understanding, and so failed in candor with himself, as to have said that? If he himself spoke as we now know he spoke, he should have had the grace to keep his mouth shut about clean language in the White House.

Nevertheless the 1960 campaign was otherwise not so bad; it can be argued that the more dubious items—the missile gap, the Communists 90 miles off our shores —were on Mr. Kennedy's side. Did Mr. Nixon do well when he declined, despite the urgings of advisers, to make backhanded use of "the religious issue" by a plea for fairness to *non-Catholics* too? Possibly. Sorenson gives him some credit for that. But it was political dynamite. Perhaps he was more of a success in his behavior after he lost the election. Mr. Kennedy's aristocratic sensibilities were offended by Mr. Nixon's bringing his tearful wife before the television cameras on election night, but—oh! the Kennedys! With all of their advantages! What did they know of the struggles of the son of grocery store owner and carpenter from Whittier, California, who had to work and work and work, without charm, without money, without connections to the Eastern elite! The intensity of Mr. Nixon's fear-hate-envy-resentment of the Kennedy's seems to have been so great as almost to make one sympathetic with it for its sheer force.

After the election of 1960, despite its closeness, Mr. Nixon did not contest the result, although many Republicans believed the election to have been stolen in Illinois.



He took the result, close though it was, and the disappointment of not achieving that high office, with good grace. One relented a little. Perhaps he was at last something of a success after all.

But then came the 1962 election for Governor of California, and not only another shoddy campaign (the death penalty for dope peddlers—a thrust at Pat Brown's opposition to capital punishment) but also that unbelievable press conference after he lost.

In 1962, as one of the commentators said, he showed that he was a sore loser; in 1972 he showed that he was a sore winner. He had already showed it in public words and actions November 1972-March 1973, even before the transcripts revealed the ugly private side of it.

Still when the end came one hoped for some grace, dignity, honor, success. One sat down before one's TV set on the night of Aug. 8, 1974, wondering how it would be. Those of us who already found the smoking gun in that same TV set on Sept. 23, 1952, at the latest had been a little impatient with those who required twenty-two years more of proof. Still, here it was. And

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after he spoke one said it wasn't as bad as it might have been: no rancor, no bitterness, no attacks on enemies, a certain dignity. But not enough. He said that his support in Congress had "eroded," without a suggestion of why: as though they had abandoned him, as though there had been a disagreement on policy. He came perilously close to yet another variant of that Nixonian displacing and diffusing of the blame, now here, now there, now everywhere, now another place, never on himself, that marked the whole Watergate episode. There was one brief reference to errors of judgment—nothing more. And the next morning in his maudlin farewell in the White House, and his campaign speech in Orange County, he marred the dignity of his departure. What was needed was a strong man's honest and public admission of guilt. The reason that was needed is like the reason Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kissinger said we needed a slow, masked, "honorable" withdrawal from Vietnam: in order that one not leave a festering wound in the psyche of the silent majority. The events of Aug. 5-9 happened so fast that their full meaning did not have a chance to penetrate the further reaches of Rabbi Korff's constituency. There is the danger that the myth will grow, and be a part of tomorrow's politics, that Mr. Nixon was hounded out of office by that standard list of his enemies. What happened to Congressmen Wiggins and Dennis and Sandman may not be known or remembered. For that reason, and not for any vindictive or punitive reason, it is important that there be no immunity and that at last the full story of Watergate be brought out, in the courts and in the House action on the Judiciary Committee's report.

Seeds of Dislike

Mr. Nixon believed we opposed him because he was a Republican, a Conservative, and not an Easterner. But that was not true. The people who disliked Richard Nixon's public performance had no comparable dislike for Robert Taft, William Knowland, Barry Goldwater, and now most especially Gerald Ford, all of whom are or were more conservative, more Republican, and perhaps even more un-Eastern than Richard Nixon. The dislike had rather to do with what it takes to be an honorable, a "successful," public man.

Mr. Ford is now receiving the highest marks, as earlier in a different way Mr. Kissinger did, by a kind of compensatory principle in public esteem: blocked off from its attachment to the President it flowed, perhaps a little excessively, to Mr. Kissinger, and it now in relief and catharsis comes flooding in to President Ford.

Mr. Ford, a commentator noted, *made* the football team at Michigan, and has not needed thereafter continually to prove himself a man by "winning." Perhaps it would have been better had Richard Nixon made the first team at Whittier. That might have meant he would not have had the drive to "fight," "hang tough," and "stonewall," through his career. He might just have been the football coach, and debate coach, at Whittier College, teaching some American history on the side. He might never have become President. But then, we might all thereby have been better off, including Richard Nixon. And he might have been a success.

GUILT COMPLEXITIES

THE SCREEN

Distribution of Claude Chabrol's films has been so skimpy and random in this country that it would be more correct to call it their withholding than their distribution. Out of about 25 features, only a half dozen or so have premiered here the year they were made. Others have been delayed two years or more, and still others, between five and ten, have never been shown here at all. Chabrol's films are sure to get prompt commercial attention only when they can be sold to the public for their sensationalism (*Landru*, 1963), sex (*Les Biches*, 1968) or stars (*Ten Days Wonder*, 1971). Otherwise, Chabrol is slighted. Perhaps the finest film he has made, *Just Before Nightfall* (1972), still has no American distributor so far as I know.

It is therefore a rare treat that two Chabrol films—*Ophelia* and *Wedding in Blood*—should suddenly turn up for the first time together. When you consider that these two films were made ten years apart and we have not had a chance to see much of what came between them, it seems that Chabrol's career is only becoming more and more fragmented for us as time passes. Strangely, though, this isn't the effect. The work of a director of Chabrol's caliber has to it a certain organic quality, an irreducible unity, that allows us to start with almost any film and sense at once the relationship it must bear to all the others. Each film has an integrity of its own, a coherence and construction, that suggests similar qualities must exist from film to film in Chabrol's career as a whole.

Some ways are readily apparent in which *Ophelia*, though made in 1962, relates to *Wedding in Blood*, which was done only two years ago. Both are, like many other Chabrol films, stories of the eternal triangle. In *Ophelia* a rich widow has married her brother-in-law almost before her husband is buried. In *Wedding in Blood* a woman and her lover murder her husband. Moreover, there is in each film an innocent, so to speak, who is an instrument of revenge upon the lovers. As the title suggests, *Ophelia* is a wrinkle on *Hamlet*. Taking his cues from Shakespeare's hero, the dead man's son

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in the film, Yvan (Andre Jocelyn), suspects his new stepfather and becomes obsessed with exposing him. In *Wedding in Blood* the woman's daughters betrays her to the police, albeit unintentionally.

Even certain details, little vignettes recognizable from other Chabrol films as well, crop up almost predictably in these films. In *Wedding in Blood*, for instance, there is an eating scene where one of the characters suddenly pours a whole glass of red wine into his soup. It's an unexpectedly gross and disgusting gesture of a sort for which Chabrol has a very acute eye in eating scenes. It also his its counterpart in *Ophelia* in a dinner-table row where Yvan claims he saw a servant spit into the fish everyone is eating.

Despite such similarities of plot, in a fundamental sense these two films are *about* different things. *Wedding in Blood* is about passion, while *Ophelia* is about art, about the potential that modern life has, or lacks, for affecting drama. Yet even in this the films remain more significantly alike than not because they are still alike in the very way each is put together. In *Ophelia* Chabrol tells us what is on his mind the first time that Yvan, his mother and stepfather get together. As the stepfather sits in the drawing room reading some classical poetry to his new wife, Yvan comes in and purposely interrupts by playing pop tunes on the piano. The tension this incident creates is what gives impetus to the entire plot, and throughout that plot Chabrol is at every turn experimenting with the ways in which modern sensibilities and modern arts jar on classical conceptions.

The culmination of the design in Chabrol's film is Yvan's adoption of the mouse-trap play, which is here not a play but a home movie. This means to "catch the conscience of the king" is so stagy and contrived a device that, besides producing a laughably melodramatic silent film for the mouse trap itself, it turns Chabrol's own movie into a burlesque, a melodrama, in ways that Chabrol's direction playfully acknowledges and exploits. The classic revenge tragedy just won't play on the screen, and Chabrol's film is an attempt to make a screen art out of that very impossibility. In a modern setting, Hamlet is ultimately crazy and Ophelia sane. The ghost is illusory and the king innocent. Yet in Chabrol's ending the king still dies, and what is more, dies by his own hand, not his stepson's. That is the only way a modern protagonist can die tragically.

Wedding in Blood similarly begins with a scene that establishes Chabrol's concerns—an action that is to be theme for the entire film. In a woods a man (Michel Piccoli) makes love to another man's wife (Stephane Audran). The force of the scene is in the wildness and physical abandon with which they do so. After a scene like this we are not surprised that their passions soon drive them to deception and murder. But as always Chabrol's view of life is a rather jaundiced, ironical one, for in the act of pursuing this passion the lovers dilute and restrain it.

To escape detection they move their *rendezvous* from the woods to a museum, a restored chateau where they sneak after closing. As befits this move indoors, into a civilized setting, their lovemaking becomes less animal, more ritualistic. Where before they tore their clothes off and clawed at each other, now they sip champagne and he nibbles decadently on her toes. Later still, when he murders his wife so he and his mistress can meet at his house, Chabrol ceases to show their physical contact at all. Their affair becomes for us merely the intrigue of her late-night comings and goings to the house. For them it finally becomes even less than that, once they have murdered her husband as well, because they then so fear being suspected that the only relations they can permit each other are a walk she takes by his window each day. They come into physical contact again only at the end when they are put into a police car together. Tentatively, almost shyly, they hold hands, and their touch is gentle for the first time, more like the first touching of lovers than the last.

The key scene in this development is the one where the lovers meet for the first time at his house. She comes into his bedroom expecting to make love just as we expect, once again, to watch them; but instead he sits on the bed and confesses that he has murdered his wife for her. It is from this point that we quit seeing them in physical contact with one another, and the net result is to show us human nature in an aspect extraordinarily like that which we see at the end of *Ophelia*. In the earlier film after Yvan's stepfather has poisoned himself, Yvan goes to him. But to the surprise of both, Yvan can take no satisfaction in the man's suffering, and his stepfather feels no bitterness towards him.

"I couldn't have hurt a fly, and yet I feel like a criminal—why?" asks the dying man, and in the first tenderness anyone has shown in the entire film, he addresses Yvan as "My son" before he dies. The point seems clear. In Chabrol's perception the universal condition of modern life is guilt, and it is guilt and guilt alone which is capable of binding us together. At the end of *Wedding in Blood* a decade later, in that shy touch that passes between the two lovers, uniting them at last where their passion never could, the same almost gaily pessimistic view of human experience persists in Chabrol's work.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Summer Schedule

In keeping with the usual practice, *Commonweal* is again appearing on alternate weeks during the summer months. The next issue will be dated September 20. We will then resume our normal weekly publishing schedule.

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THE VATICANIZING OF AMERICAN ART

FRANK GETLEIN

Innocents on Madison Avenue

THE FIRST time the Vatican had much to do with contemporary art, it produced the High Renaissance, which, while it may be, from certain special points of view, the supreme achievement of the human race, was nevertheless a decidedly mixed value from the point of view of the sponsoring organization, the Roman Catholic Church.

It could be maintained that the central Roman event of the Renaissance in art, the planning and building of St. Peter's, led directly to the Reformation. It was to raise funds for the great church, after all, that the special indulgences were hawked in Germany bringing on their repudiation and denunciation by Martin Luther.

The last time the Vatican was a leader in the sponsorship and patronage of contemporary art, the result was Roman Baroque, another international style that flowed from the genius of Gianlorenzo Bernini to every part of the European world.

After that, the Vatican abandoned its previously intense interest in contemporary art. The reasons why have never been precisely determined—perhaps simply because when Bernini and Urban VIII had finished with Rome, nothing remained to be completed, let alone planned. They had done it all and given the city the look and the feel that the best parts of it retain to this day.

Whatever the reasons for its long indifference to contemporary art, the Vatican has now seemingly reversed itself. The results are not exactly Michelangelo or Bernini. Instead, the central figure in the Vatican's new venture in the art of the time is a New York art dealer, Lawrence Fleischman, an extremely competent dealer and an estimable person. His presence at the heart of the American section of the Contemporary Art Gallery of the Vatican Museum, however, reveals the essential shallowness of the Vatican effort and demonstrates once more, if one more demonstration is needed, the truth of Hegel's one-liner: "History always repeats itself—but as farce."

Speaking of history, the farcical aspects of the new Vatican drive into contemporary art, or at least contemporary American art, can only be appreciated fully in the light of a kind of cultural-spiritual-historical précis of American Catholicism in the middle years of the century. Anyone old enough to remember the gradual evolution of Catholic advanced thought which culminated in the second Vatican Council will remember that in this country, as in France, Germany and England, an involvement in art somehow went along with an involvement in the emergence of the new Church, or what those concerned with it thought of as the real Church.

The relationship, to some degree, was one of those symbolic, even Aesopian, substitutions of one thing for another so familiar to members of any absolutist system, such as Soviet Communism or Roman Catholicism in those days. Because many good Catholics did not quite dare to speak freely then of some of the appalling ecclesiastical and political aspects of Vatican pronouncements and actions, they got at them by speaking of art.

And the official art, of course, was vastly vulnerable. Barclay Street in New York, the St. Sulpice district in Paris, were turning out sugar-sweet statues of saints and angels, of Christ and the Virgin that could be easily shown to be total falsifications of the Gospels, the Fathers, Scholastic Philosophy, what you will.

Never quite alluded to was the obvious fact that this huge commercial production could not have survived a minute without approval, explicit or implicit, from the top. Never quite faced was the fact that if this God-awful, so-to-speak, art of holyographs and spun sugar starlets was to be seen everywhere, in churches and cathedrals, in the pages of pious magazines, in rectories and in domestic devotions, then it clearly related to those scenes and to the religion practiced in those scenes. Instead, there was a polite assumption that the holyographs had somehow crept in by mistake; someone hadn't been watching at the door and the next thing we knew, Deanna Durbin as the Virgin Mary was everywhere. It was all a case of mistaken identity and certainly as soon as it was called to the attention of the proper ecclesiastical authorities, it would be stopped.

That was the Catholic art thrust which, having its sources in England, France and Germany around the turn of the century, hit America big in the years following World War II. The key to its several levels of meaning can be found in the motto of Franciscan Sister Thomasita's art studio in Milwaukee, taken from the words vouchsafed her order's founder in a dream: "Rebuild My Church, which has fallen into ruin."

Abroad, there were such phenomena as the two French Dominican priests, Fathers Regamey and Couturier, who managed to bring into existence a whole series of small churches with decorations by some of the leading artists of the School of Paris: Rouault, of course, but also Léger, Chagall, Matisse, Jean Lurçat and, in the climax of the art-

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mission of the two Dominicans, Le Corbusier in the extraordinary chapel at Ronchamp.

At home architectural achievements were perhaps less spectacular, but there were enough to give those interested the feeling that things were moving forward. Starting before the war in Dayton, Ohio, Eloise and Otto Spaeth over a period of some twenty years mounted a series of instructive exhibitions of contemporary religious art. Working out of New York, Maurice Lavanoux and his Liturgical Arts Society spread throughout the land knowledge of whatever developments in modern ecclesiastical art Lavanoux found in his endless reportorial and evangelical travels. In Boston Celia Hubbard's various activities sparked a flame and kept it burning. In America's heartland—in many ways more receptive to advanced Catholicism on every level than the East Coast—the *Catholic Art Quarterly* of Fathers Catich and Kerrigan did the same thing with a somewhat more theological, less engagingly personal, flavor. To the north of CAQ's base in Davenport, Iowa, theologism achieved its supreme manifestation in the only Catholic bastion of revolution to make itself known to the greater American world, The Benedictine St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. On the West Coast, there was the slightly fey enterprise of Sister Corita, a charming artist who, like so many of her contemporaries, eventually leapt over the wall. And there were less influential but still important artistic efforts ranging from a Clare Boothe Luce-supported Benedictine establishment in Bethlehem, Connecticut to Andrá Girard's remarkable kinetic drawings—*not* animation—for network religious programs.

A feeling for religious art was abroad in the land. There was the belief that if the art struggle could be won, if only the Holy Father could be shown that modern art expressed modern Christianity and so on, the whole battle for modernization of the Church would be won. It is against this history and this widely shared personal attitude that the sudden emergence of a Vatican Gallery of Contemporary Art must be seen.

Had such a thing taken place during the long reign of Pius XII, American Catholic reformers—by no stretch of language could they have been called radicals—would have hailed it as the dawn of a new day in Catholicism, the end of clerical obscurantism and inquisitorial control. Alas, it is so late, and so little, that the new gallery is incapable of persuading anyone of anything except of the not entirely unexpected combination of naiveté and venality in the Vatican thrust toward art.

As far as a reasonably alert observer can reconstruct the creation of the American section of the Vatican Gallery of Contemporary Art, it happened like this:

In the spring of 1972, a couple of Roman curial officials were walking down Madison Avenue, Bishop Paul Marcinkus and Msgr. Pasquale Macchi, Pope Paul's personal secretary. What they were doing was drifting in and out of the art galleries that line that street and inquiring whether there were any works on hand that might be regarded as "Christian," however vaguely, and whether it was possible that such works might be contributed by the artist, by the dealer or by some well-intentioned donor to an as yet unannounced American section of Pope Paul's contemporary gallery.

It will surprise no one familiar with Madison Avenue dealers to learn that the two ecclesiastics got short shrift and an early exit from most of the galleries they dropped into. In the art world as at your own front door, requests for contributions from dubious solicitors are not happily received.

Somewhere along the line, the two clerics were impressed by some works by Ben Shahn, as well they might have been, for Shahn is certainly one of the strongest American painters of this century. They learned that the Shahn estate was handled by the Kennedy Galleries, a few blocks away. The rest is history, or ought to be.

Whereas most of the Madison Avenue dealers had turned a cold shoulder to the ecclesiastics' thinly disguised plea for a handout, Lawrence Fleischman immediately recognized their situation as an opportunity. Details are unrevealed, but it is not difficult to guess at who's quid and who's quo in the arrangement that was worked out.

Fleischman became the Pope's purchasing agent in the United States. He also became vice president of the Committee of Religion and Art of America, serving under Terence Cardinal Cooke as president. To the surprise of no one but the Vatican, if they ever did learn about it, the substantial majority of the American paintings and sculptures in the Pope's Contemporary Gallery turned out to be by artists represented by Fleischman's Kennedy Galleries and turned out to vary from superb to less than mediocre.

Kennedy Galleries has some formidable people on its roster: Jack Levine, Abraham Rattner, Shahn, Philip Evergood, Leonard Baskin and Jose De Creeft are among them. That isn't the point. The point is that you do not turn over the acquisition authority of a presumably non-profit, public service art enterprise to a private, for-profit art dealer.

The key phrase here is that of Paul VI when he opened the Contemporary Gallery almost a year ago. The expenditures for the art, he assured his hearers, in no way burdened "the already strained budget of the Holy See" nor diminished funds available for charitable works. That can only mean that the American paintings are costing the Pope nothing, in sharp contrast to his magnificent predecessors in the Renaissance and Baroque periods who paid for value received and got what they paid for and then some. That can only mean that the art acquisitions at the Vatican have come as gifts from artists, gifts from dealers, chiefly Larry Fleischman, or gifts from private collectors, chiefly Larry Fleischman's customers.

If, like thyme or oregano, you gently sprinkle over this situation the knowledge we all have of tax deductibility for gifts to religious establishments—the archdiocese of New York

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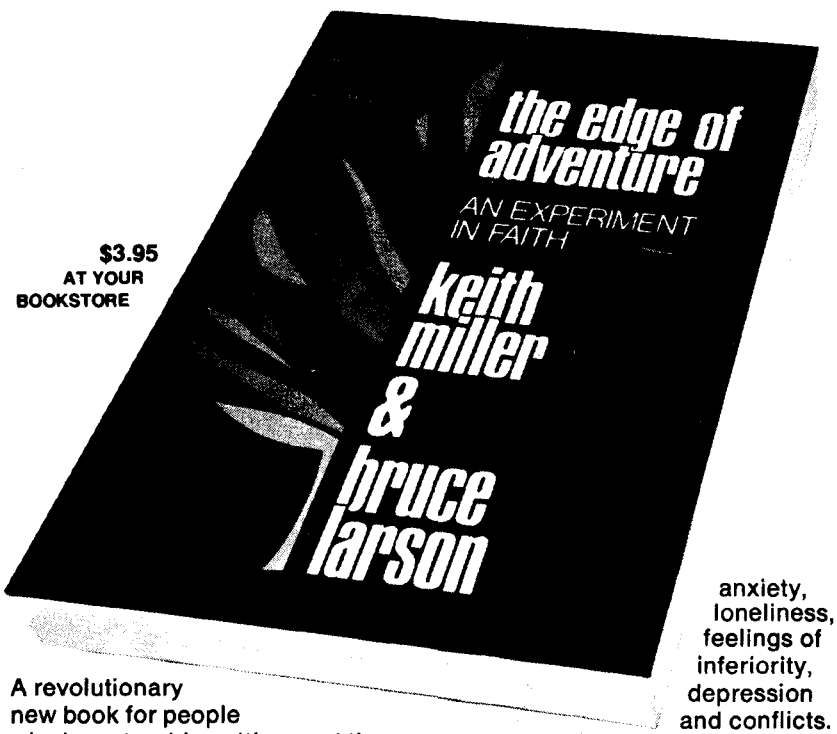
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?



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rather than the foreign pope of Rome —you don't have to be an accounting genius to figure out how an astute dealer can make money himself and pass along the opportunity to make money and accumulate prestige to some of his favored customers.

Having figured that out, the student of these things will not be surprised to learn that the official American party at the Vatican opening consisted in large part of regular customers of the Kennedy Galleries.

Now, nothing in this analysis should be taken as derogative of Larry Fleischman or the Kennedy Galleries. He behaved exactly as a dealer ought to behave, as any entrepreneur in any field ought to behave: looking for the likeliest chance, seizing it and exploiting it to the full. That's what free enterprise is all about. But free enterprise is not what religious art, or, for that matter, religion itself, is supposed to be about, despite the occasional simple-minded exhortation from ecclesiastics of all faiths to get out there and sell the message.

The thing most prominently missing from the Pauline-Fleischman set-up when announced a year ago was some kind of selection process, some group of selection people, the group known in museum boards of trustees as the Acquisitions Committee, traditionally the most prestigious if not the most important of all the trustee committees museums have.

What an Acquisitions Committee does is decide what to acquire and what not to acquire both in regard to purchases and in regard to proposed gifts. There was a time in American museum history when many museums, even some in quite respectably sized cities, would happily accept almost any gift offered. One result of that policy was to cover the walls of American museums with inferior works, fake works and misattributed works and the result of that, of course, was to blur the idea of art history in the minds of any students or museum visitors who depended upon what they found on the walls to instruct their knowledge and sharpen their taste. However much the instincts of

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bandits and graverobbers may or may not still flourish among museum trustees and directors, they have at least taken on the enormous and institutionally painful task of rethinking all the wrong decisions of their own predecessors. For a couple of decades now, pictures have been quietly vanishing from the walls to reappear with the names of lesser artists than they formerly bore, or vanishing altogether in exchange or as gifts to "study collections" in universities.

But if the hippopotamus of the art museum has indeed taken wing, ascending from the damp savannahs to be washed clean in the blood of lamb, as in Eliot's vision, it is still accurate to say, as the poet did, that "the True Church remains below,/Wrapt in the old miasmal mist."

Without a thoroughly professional Acquisitions Committee at the helm, the American Gallery at the Vatican started out, in 1973, in the manner common among American art museums in 1873 and for the next half to three-quarters of a century. Only this spring was such a committee appointed and when it was its composition was odd, to say the least.

The three members are distinguished art historians and museum people, but they are not distinguished in the least for their sympathy with, knowledge of or appreciation of contemporary American art. Lloyd Goodrich, long of the Whitney Museum, and E. P. Richardson, long of the Detroit Institute of Art and more recently at Winterthur, are both towering figures in the scholarship of 19th century American painting, while the third member, Mitchell Wilder of the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth is, like his museum, known for his expertise in Western American art. The strange composition of the committee suggests that the three museum men are there chiefly because they are friends or institutional customers of Fleischman and Kennedy, which has always been the leading New York dealer in Western art.

The second thing missing was any hint that the enterprise had been in touch with the numerous Catholics in the United States who have devoted their lives to the cause of bringing into being some sort of intelligent relationship between religion and art. It is nothing less than a scandal that Maurice Lavanoux, for one, was never consulted, never even rung up on the telephone. Beyond Lavanoux the country is studded with individuals and groups of Catholics who have engaged in that work. At least two of them, Mrs. Spaeth of New York and Mrs. Jean de Menil of Texas, have imposing credentials of their own in the larger institutional art world outside the Church.

At best, such a failure even to check in with such long-established professionals in the field was short-sighted. At worst, it was insulting.

In the old days recalled above, a time that now seems from another century, even another country, American Catholics interested in art and specifically in religious art or Christian art without exception took it for granted that their Church was not in the least interested, that the best religious art might hope for from the Church was what Lavanoux once called "benevolent indifference."

Th establishment of the American contemporary gallery in the Vatican gives them no reason to change their minds.

BOOKS

HARRISBURG: A SUMMING UP

DORIS GRUMBACH

Conspiracy

JOHN C. RAINES, ed.

Harper & Row, $6.95

Conspiracy is an in-depth study by a number of serious and concerned writers "of the implications of the Harrisburg Trial for the democratic tradition," its somewhat ponderous subtitle. Well edited by John Raines, who sees the trial as an understandable striking back during the Vietnam war by "a White House which felt itself assaulted by its moral critics," this book offers, for the present time, the unpleasant shock of contrast. In the face of the extraordinary, felonious Watergate tales and all the activities of the Administration which brought the Harrisburg 7 to trial, the events of those days in 1972 seem almost comic; it is as though a holocaust had been preceded by a game of cops-and-robbers.

Robert McAfee Brown's introduction notes that in his view, the facts of Watergate have not reduced Harrisburg: "Watergate italicizes the importance of Harrisburg, while pointing out the trivial, even comic elements: the 'impractical and implausible' notion of kidnapping or citizen's arrest of Henry Kissinger," which he calls "a trial balloon" leading to a trial which never justified its promise as "the political encounter of the century." He quotes Sheldon Smith's comment that it was "something like being promised the apocalypse and winding up with a leaky basement."

Nonetheless, as Brown and others in the volume point out, it was not the relatively foolish, naive letters on which a substantial part of the case was built but that the conspiracy charge was, and still is, a means of stopping free assembly and free expression of opinion. Writes Brown: "There must be no re-

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straint whatever on what is thinkable and speakable. All ideas deserve to be expressed and reacted to, both for the positive purpose of creating and refining new modes of expression and action, and also for the negative purpose of being beaten down and discarded as silly, impractical, or immoral." The Harrisburg 7 experience—after the illicit invasions of the Ellsberg break-in and Watergate, the bugging and tailing of private and public persons—seems child's play born out of a few citizens' despair at governmental indifference to their views. The great error of the trial as Brown sees it was "the persistent attempt to use the judicial process to destroy dissent." And so essentially, dissenters.

Other essays in the volume are of equal interest. Arthur I. Waskow's piece regards the Catonsville act as "the collision of radical Catholics and the F.B.I. . . . the rediscovery of the seeds of Catholicism:" of Exodus, Passover, a tendency toward a Jewish understanding of the world, and the addition of a new element that is purely Christian, the tradition of martyrdom. Robert Coles' summary of common-man thought on the subject, and the perceptive legal history and summary of the trial by Ronald Goldfarb: both are readable contributions.

But I have put off dealing with Michael Novak's long essay because, despite all the time I have spent with it, and the number of times I have read it, I have not been able to come to terms with his thought. Novak is a serious thinker and a serious man, and his iconoclastic view of the Berrigans, *et al*, deserves serious consideration.

Novak's aim, as I understand it, is to demythologize the Berrigans and those who were indicted with them, by changing their presumed idealism and witness (as others saw it) to something less. He distrusts the apocalyptic nature of their "discovery of evil in the world." They (he is here talking of the brothers) were, to him, "men too soon appalled," moved by a certain "preachiness" which is closer to moral Protestantism than "quite Catholic." Their "all-too-American innocence" disturbs him, their resort to a symbolic act against the Vietnam war strikes him as quixotic in the light of all the oppressive wars and institutions which have acted against mankind throughout history.

Did they act out of historic awareness? Novak thinks not, but instead from "personal need," out of epiphanic awareness of evil. What they chose to do at Catonsville was as provocative as US policy was provocative in Vietnam; it was as well an act of self-purification of evil. What seems to bother Novak most is the class bias of their thinking: "(Dan Berrigan embodies) a vision of good and evil proper to the upper classes and their children versus a vision on the part of ordinary citizens of lesser education but no less intelligence and good faith. A struggle between the Berrigans and their class versus other classes in America."

Like most of us, Novak confesses to feeling half-attracted by what the Berrigans and their associates did. But the other half of him dissents from their act, resents the biases of "The Movement" and feels, therefore, that their acts were sterile and fruitless. The War was not a unique occurrence. "There is hereditary injustice written into every institution in every human society. Nowhere is the social order just, equal, human, fruitful—except by some relative standard. Nowhere does the society of actuality coincide with the society of dreams."

Catonsville was apolitical. It lacked organization, accountability, responsibility for power. It created no constituency, it did no damage to "the system." What was worse, he claims, ordinary persons could not understand it; it spoke only to "the already saved, an educated elite." Novak is convinced that the Harrisburg 7 were scornful of ordinary citizens, contemptuous of the political processes in which lower-class Americans so often place their unwavering trust. In the end, they are romantics, Don Quixotes speaking not to the Panchos of the world but to each other: "It (Catonsville) was the expression of a personal quest. It was clerical. It lacked political penetration and point. For too many it was repellent rather than persuasive. In all ways it was morally and politically deficient." Novak's cool, historical, analytic, ethnic and yet at the same time cosmic ("one symbolic act meant to challenge the whole history of America?") realism finds them in their idealism impatient, indeed scornful, of "the slow, lumbering ways of democratic politics." The pragmatist in him is warmed but still repelled by their acts of imagination.

Summary is not enough; one, must, clearly, take sides. Like Novak I am torn (but on the other side) by a personal idiosyncratic preference for idealism, no matter what its basis, no matter how hopeless or how without "political penetration" it may be, especially when the idealist puts his freedom at stake and when the end in view is opposition to genocide, political suicide, immoral and murderous military acts. Most of the Harrisburg 7 were Catholic, a church which had "symbolized" for so long much that I found unacceptable when it came to war. So I was grateful for their idealistic and symbolic act as an antidote, in the eyes of the non-Catholic community if not of the working-class Catholics, to Cardinal Spellman. I was proud of the Berrigans and their friends, hoped they were penetrating the factories and the pews as well as the classrooms, the podiums, the poetry centers. Perhaps (most likely) they were not, as Novak says, because others, priests, politicians, bishops, were preaching the inevitability, even the virtues, of war, the imminence of the Communist yellow peril, and the morality of obedience to Caesar. Francine Gray said: "I hold the Catholic hierarchy as ultimately responsible for the Berrigan's so-called radicalism." Perhaps they were fools to think that, as Novak chides them with, politics could be the realm of salvation. But when he reproaches them with looking to politics for the meaning of life, and concludes that therefore they are "doomed to frustration," I find myself wondering, with them and even with Thomas à Becket and Sir Thomas More, in what special niche or narrow corner the full meaning of our lives does reside, whether it is impossible to

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omit politics from some of the ultimate saving concerns. Agreed that "politics is far from being able to fulfill the capacities of the human soul." I doubt that Philip Berrigan, Elizabeth McAlister, Daniel Berrigan, Eqbal Ahmad, Neil McLaughlin, Anthony Scoblick, and Joseph Wenderoth were looking to it for that kind of fulfilment. They wanted to aid a cause, all else having, to their minds, failed, including politics. They too may have failed, as it seemed Becket had failed after his blood was spilled by the king's order on the altar at Canterbury, as More had failed after his almost solitary defiance of Henry. It may well be too soon to tell about the Harrisburg company.

Talleyrand: The Art of Survival

JEAN ORIEUX

Knopf, $12.95

Talleyrand: A Biography

J. F. BERNARD

Putnam's, $12.95

MARGARET WIMSATT

Talleyrand failed of ultimate stature because his actions were always too precisely attuned to the dominant mood, because nothing ever engaged him so completely that he would bring it the sacrifice of personal advancement. This may have been due to a sincere attempt to remain in a position to moderate events, but outsiders may be forgiven if they consider it opportunism.

This balanced appraisal of a dead diplomat comes from the most famous of the living, Henry Kissinger, in his 1958 book about the Congress of Vienna, *A World Restored*. It may be that some parallel between the turbulent times that led to the Congress, and our own time, accounts for the recent appearance, within a few months of each other, of two books so similar. Talleyrand has been much written about, occasionally in praise, but from the days of his enemy Chateaubriand, the vilifications have been spectacular. Recent attacks on Thomas Jefferson's morals or Richard Nixon's probity are pale and polite compared to what Talleyrand's contemporaries said and wrote of him.

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord decided early that his missions were to serve France and to grow rich, and so he did through most of his eighty-four years, under many changes of flag. As a young man, he attended the coronation of Louis XVI. He survived the Revolution, the Reign of Terror, the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire of Napoleon the First, the Restoration in its several phases (he served three of these Bourbon monarchs, though Charles X detested him). His pedigree was as old as any of his masters; it went back to the toes of Charlemagne. His greatest exploit, the one for which he is remembered today, was to salvage at the Congress of Vienna for a France laid in ruins by Napoleon's follies a measure of dignity and workable boundaries. (Alas, he was compelled to let the King of Prussia extend his boundaries to the Rhine, a misfortune for which all Europe was later to pay.) He acted always as a citizen of the most enlightened country the West had produced. On the home front he worked for: the Concordat with Rome, which liberated church riches for the public good, state education for all, the metric system. He felt that France, where his forebears had been men of importance since the ninth century, bore a responsibility for *civilisation*—reason, political sophistication, the arts—to be spread to Russians and Prussians if possible, but first to be maintained at home. The conviction of caste, of his own patriotism, were so strong in him that he was indifferent to which particular regime he served.

One exception seems to have been the attraction he felt for the young Bonaparte; not political in nature, it was more like an infatuation. But the attraction waned slowly as the First Consul made himself Emperor (this Talleyrand approved, as contributing to financial stability, always one of his major concerns) and then proceeded to waste France's treasure in needless wars of ambition, disruptive of commerce, a deadly throwaway of very young men's lives. After Vienna he continued to serve, sometimes as Minister of Foreign Affairs, sometimes as mastermind of an opposition. Occasionally he spoke at the *Institut de France* which he had helped found in 1795. In 1830, when he was seventy-six, Louis-Philippe sent him as Ambassador to London where, in spite of distractions and infirmity, he succeeded in laying the foundations for the long-standing Anglo-French entente. It was his last post. He refused the later offer of the Vienna Embassy, where his old friend Metternich would have been glad to welcome him, and retired to his country estate at Valençay.

The external facts of Talleyrand's life are not in dispute. Birth, ordination, offices, death: these are of public record, and, in the most garrulous of ages, *Mémoires* de . . . abound in private gossip about him, friendly or inimical. He was born into an old and famous family. He was baptised the day he was born, and on the same day put out to nurse. His parents, busy with their Court duties, ignored him. It was the fashion of that era, pre-Rousseau, but one feels that they might have taken enough interest in him to find out that his wet-nurse had let him fall from the top of a dresser, thus breaking the bones of one foot and leaving him a suffering cripple for life: *pied-court*.

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On observing the effects of their negligence, they realized he would never do for the army, destined him for the Church. They sent him, to encourage him, to his uncle the Archbishop of Rheimes, but in spite of the wealth and power he saw there, the clerical life did not attract him. But what alternative had he? and, reluctantly, he was ordained. Having received various benefices at the disposal of Louis XVI, he was named Bishop of Autun, and represented that district at the assembly of the Estates-General in 1787. After the fall of the monarchy he gladly surrendered his soutane.

"I am perhaps the only man of distinguished birth, belonging to a numerous and esteemed family, who has not, for a single week of his life, enjoyed the sweetness of being under his father's roof," wrote Talleyrand in the *Mémoires* composed in his old age. Undoubtedly he was bitter, but as a Talleyrand-Périgord he remained, on the surface, polite. His lonely upbringing may have been the reason for his delight in feminine society, and one reason for his hospitality, in his Paris *hôtels*, and in the seigneurial country estate Napoleon purchased for him. His private life was undoubtedly licentious. His ways were those of the earlier century, and the nineteenth was shocked, romanticist and religious alike. From the viewpoint of the twentieth, we can perhaps afford to notice his genuine affection and generosity. He remained friends with most of his mistresses (Mme. de Stäel was an exception; she had ambitions of her own); they were referred to in society as his harem. He provided generously for his bastards, to the alarm of his legitimate relations.

His pious death may be attributed in the main to the prayers and efforts of his last mistress, the Duchess of Dino, his nephew's wife, and their daughter, Pauline. They it was who through the offices of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris, brought the good Abbé Doupanloup to his house (*un homme qui sait vivre*," said Talleyrand, unexpectedly). Then, scandal to top all others, this worldly man, having signed all necessary documents for the Archbishop and the Pope, died reconciled to the holy, Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church. At the last anointing, Talleyrand was alert enough not to open his palms to the holy oils. "I am a bishop," he said, and turned his knuckles up to receive Holy Chrism. The duchess and her daughter were relieved, not only that his soul should have been rescued, but that the obsequies could now be seemly. They were indeed splendid, well-enough arranged to have delighted the man who in three reigns had been court chamberlain.

The two books at hand have many similarities. Both are scholarly *and* entertaining. Orieux' book was published earlier in France (Flammarion, 1970) with an interestingly different subtitle: *Talleyrand, ou, Le Sphinx Incompris.* In spite of their telling the same tale, there is a good deal of difference between them. Orieux has somewhat more French history, is furnished with more genealogies and pictures, while Bernard's is plain. Orieux has written novels, Bernard apparently not. Orieux has been badly served by his translator, who in an effort to shine up his perfectly interesting prose, has introduced an appalling string of elegantly varied epithets: our hero, our bishop, our minister, repeated page after page till the reader screams. The two men differ on one substantial point. Bernard hedges on the responsibility for the assassination by candlelight of the Duc d'Enghien in 1804; Orieux puts the blame boldly on "our hero," alleging that he removed from state files all documents connecting him with the murder.

Two interesting books. Those who like French atmosphere, an ironic tone, should choose the French author. Bernard's will probably be of more use to serious students.

Note: Readers who enjoy biography as fiction can do no better than to read or reread Kipling's story, in *Rewards and Fairies*, "A Priest in Spite of Himself." Here is the real Talleyrand in a nutshell, devious, lordly, and generous.

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IN BRIEF

BUSY BEING BORN *by Todd Gitlin, Straight Arrow Books, $3.95.* Todd Gitlin has produced a competent first collection of poetry, but it is long for a single book (75 poems), and I would have found it more exciting if perhaps a third—not, of course, any third—of the contents had been omitted. Some of his images are not only fresh and intriguing but in context, in the best sense, startling: "If words could heal/ Webster would walk on water" and "Smiles pull like sweaters over our doubt." But other images repeat a single idea with too little variation and elaboration, even an important idea like the relationship of language and silence, which Mr. Gitlin seems to see as the complementary parts of every poem. "Silence carved in screams," he writes in one poem, and elsewhere, "the martyr will make the silence scream," "I painted the bedroom walls with silence," "listen to the quiet, dissolving/ into the sound of which it is made," and "With every song/silence to be heard as an accompaniment." The less successful poems here string together metaphors without subduing them to a common interest and often end with a kind of punch line; but in the best of the collection, like "The Defeated," "Hiatus," and "To My Enemy," there is an admirable integration of theme and language. MARK TAYLOR

Abigail McCarthy (Cont.)

instructions. I explained about Brunhilde.

It was TWA's fault. My name was not on their list.

But I had checked with Pan-Am in Washington. I was worried that there was not enough time to make the connection. ("It's plenty of time," said the nice voice in charge of the computer, "but put some extra clothes in a carry-on bag just in case." "Good idea," I said, "I'll put in a nightie." "If you wear one," she had replied.)

I persisted in misunderstanding, huffed my escort, that there was a difference between a reservation and a confirmation. It was the fault of my travel agency. But he would overlook all these faults and put me on an extra plane going to Berlin if I would just get on it. He did not have time to discuss people's failure to make their connections properly.

I waited until I had my boarding pass and was through the gate. It is best to be prudent. Then I asked his name. "Kunz," he said haughtily, "K-U-N-Z." "Mr. Kunz," I said, "I will write about this." And I have.

My experience was more of an annoyance than a serious inconvenience, but it left me disheartened and feeling abused. I was recovering from a slight accident and I had been up for thirty-some hours. Yet, as Ralph Nader pointed out recently, this inefficiency and over-selling on the part of the airlines is becoming the norm. It can and has ruined vacations for retirees and workers who have planned and saved for their vacations for a year or more. Families with young children and slim resources have been left stranded in airports far from home. There is a climate of callousness in this; it pursues us overseas. Who is to say whether the source of similar callousness created Watergate or spilled over from it?

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 467)

parently she is not aware of the efforts of Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, junior Senator from Minnesota, in this area. I doubt that there is another member of Congress, male or female, who has shown as much or greater compassion.

There are other comments in the article that are repugnant and bigoted. But the worst is the one where she states that "Women experience war as community destroyed." With this statement, she implies that men do not, perhaps can't see the brutality of war. Perhaps she is not aware that the two Senators who voted against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening, were men. Evidently, she is not aware of the hawkish stance taken by former Sen. Margaret Smith of Maine.

Frankly, I have yet to see much evidence of women, supporting amnesty of any sort. On one occasion I can recall women shouting "traitors," "communists," and other epithets at a contingent of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. I have heard women refer to draft evaders as cowards.

In closing, it is obvious that neither sex has a monopoly of humane or callous sentiments. JAMES D. HOLMES

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THE MISSIONARY Brothers of Charity plan a kitchen and shelter for homeless, destitute street children in the refugee-swollen Cambodian capital. Help for their project can be sent to: Catholic Relief Services, 1011 First Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

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